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## THE GIRLHOOD OF AN ACTRESS.\*

BY MARY ANDERSON DE NAVARRO.

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THE second child of a large family, my mother was brought up according to the most rigorous principles. Her thoughts were hardly her own; her literature was chosen for her, consisting of the *Lives of the Saints* and other pious books; while plays, dances, and the amusements generally permitted to the young, were strictly forbidden, and practically unknown to her. My excellent grandparents, though Roman Catholics, had been educated to believe that the natural tendencies of the theatre were "downward and pernicious," and their children in turn were not allowed even to think of entering such a place. However, by the aid of her eldest and favorite brother, his pardonable dissimulation, and a friendly latch-key, my mother was, at the age of seventeen, smuggled into one of those "dens of iniquity" for the first time. She was carried away by the talent and great beauty of Mrs. D. P. Bowers, and by the charm surrounding that interesting, though sensational and old-fashioned play, "The Sea of Ice."

It was probably this breath of romance that caused her to grow more and more restive under the strict discipline of her home life. At any rate, it was soon after her first visit to the theatre that she found a way of meeting, and losing her heart to, Charles H. Anderson, a young man of English birth, who had just finished his education at Oxford. Clever, scholarly, charming in presence and manner, devoted to sport, a passionate lover of the drama and all things artistic, he was the very man to win the admiration of a girl whose life had been as narrow and fettered as hers. With all his graces and accomplishments, he was, unfor-

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tunately, not religious, and his proposal for my mother's hand was met by a stern refusal from her parents. They were especially opposed to the marriage of their daughter with a man devoid of faith. My mother was therefore forbidden to see him again, though from a worldly point of view her lover had everything in his favor. For some months a secret correspondence was carried on between them. Wearying, however, of continued separation, and aided again by the favorite brother, they eloped and were clandestinely married. The young couple, after a year's sojourn in New York and Philadelphia, wended their way westward in 1859, only a few weeks before my birth.

We left Sacramento when I was still a child in arms, my mother wishing to be near her uncle, who was pastor of a small German congregation near Louisville, Ky. Her parents had not forgiven her for marrying against their wishes, and she felt the need of a friend during the frequent absences of my father in England. We took up our abode in Louisville in 1860.

New California was situated just outside of Louisville, and here "Pater Anton," as my uncle was called, had long been a great favorite. On his feast-day it was delightful to see his congregation in their "Sunday clothes," bringing their children for his blessing, the little creatures in bright-colored German frocks, laden with flowers, fruits, eggs, home-knitted socks, cotton handkerchiefs of the brightest red and yellow, cooing pigeons, quacking ducks, chickens, while a pig or two (from the richer parishioners) invariably joined in the general chorus of holiday-makers. Pater Anton was the gayest of them all, for though a man of great learning, an accomplished linguist, a fine musician, and an eloquent preacher, he was simpler than the simplest of his flock. His appearance was so striking that passers-by turned to look at him in the street. He was tall, with an habitual stoop. His features were finely chiselled, and his straight black hair, worn long, was cut like Liszt's. He had the most beautiful mouth and teeth I have ever seen, the sweetest smile, and the heartiest laugh in the world. My mother could not have chosen a better friend for herself or for her children.

"*Dans nos souvenirs la mort touche la naissance.*" My father died when I was but three years of age, and within a few months of the birth of my brother. He died at Mobile at the age of twenty-four, in the full flush of his youth, "extinguished, not

decayed." I remember nothing of his voice, look, or manner ; nor have we any portrait of him now remaining.

Pater Anton ("Nonie," as I called him, "uncle" being an impossible word for me then) often came to cheer our little family. I can see him still, on his fat old lazy horse, trotting up the street, his long hair waving in the wind, his face shining with pleasure, his rusty coat, shining also (with age, for he thought it worldly to have more than one new coat in eight years), while from his large pockets, dolls, trumpets, jumping-jacks, and other ravishing toys stuck out in every direction. What a picture he was of kindness and child-like gaiety, and how we hailed him with cries of joy and clapping of hands !

My brother and I were frequently allowed to go to New California to visit Nonie. The bright little town, with its houses painted blue, red, pink and white, with meadows and pastures intersecting them, looked more like a toy town than a "real live one." Now, alas ! all the quaint prettiness has vanished ; large factories, ugly breweries and brickyards disfigure it. The church, the priest's house, and the school of the old time, alone remain. We always spent the great feast-days there. Especially do I remember Corpus Christi. On that day, the pasture near the church seemed to my childish eyes like an enchanted scene. Many altars were erected there, covered with lace, flowers and lighted candles. The village band played festal music, and was answered by the distant notes of the organ and choir from the little church. Three times the beautiful procession filed around the pasture. Preceded by small girls in white, scattering rose-leaves, and acolytes swinging their silver censers, came Pater Anton carrying the monstrance. Kneeling in the grass, we sent up fervent prayers, the warm summer sun shining like a benediction over all.

Nonie began to teach me the organ. He wished to train my brother and me for the lives he and my mother had mapped out for us. My brother was to study medicine and help him generally (Nonie was an excellent physician, and could soothe the bodily as well as the spiritual ills of his flock), while I was destined to care for his small household, tend the parish poor, train the choir, and play the organ on Sundays and holidays. But man proposes and God disposes.

About that time, after remaining a widow for five years,  
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my mother was married to Dr. Hamilton Griffin, of Louisville, a surgeon and major in the Southern army, who had gone through the entire war, having been wounded severely on two occasions. I was then eight years old, and it was thought necessary to begin my general education. They took me to the Convent of the Ursulines, near Louisville, and left me there. Who that has ever suffered it can forget the first great homesickness? I remember distinctly my utter misery when the grated door closed upon the mother and brother from whom I had never before been separated. The convent was a large Italian-looking building, surrounded by gardens, and shut in by high prison-like walls. That first night in the long dormitory, with its rows of white beds and their little occupants, some as sad as myself, my grief seemed more than I could bear. The moon made a track of light across the floor. A strain of soft music came in at the open window; it was only an accordion, played by some one sitting outside the convent wall, but how sweet and soothing it was! The simple little melody seemed to say: "See what a friend I can be! I am Music, sent from Heaven to cheer and console. Love me, and I will soothe and calm your heart when it is sad, and double all your joys." It kept saying such sweet things to me that soon I fell asleep and dreamed I was at home again. From that night I felt music to be a panacea for all my childhood's sorrows.

Owing to an indolent nature and an impatient dislike for the beginnings of things, I learned little besides music and a smattering of German, which was promptly forgotten. Thinking only of amusement, I had, with wicked forethought, begged my indulgent mother to provide my school uniform with spacious pockets. These were secretly filled with wee china dolls, bits of stuff and sewing implements, with which I made entire trousseaux for the charming dollies during the study hours, and, when the unsuspecting nun was not looking, kept the girls in a constant titter by dancing the dolls upon my desk as each new dress was donned. Our convent uniform consisted of a plain blue cashmere skirt and bodice, and a large straw scoop-bonnet, with a curtain at the back. In this most unpicturesque costume we were marched to church on Sunday, two and two, where my enthusiastic singing of the litany generally put the others out, and where, to the horror of the nuns, in my haste to leave the church, I invariably genuflected with my

back to the altar. The first year went by quite uneventfully, until the end of the term, which was celebrated, as usual, by an "exhibition," as they called the songs and recitations given by the children. An *exhibition* it was! The nuns, knowing that my mother would dress me tastefully for the occasion, put me in the front row of the opening chorus—an appropriate one, for it began with :

" My grandfather had some very fine geese,  
Some very fine geese had he,  
With a quack quack here, and a quack quack there,  
And a here quack, there quack, here, there quack,  
Oh, come along girls, to the merry green fields,  
To the merry green fields so gay ! "

This artistically poetic and musical gem contained verses enough to name all the animals possessed by that unfortunate grandfather. The long rehearsals over, the all-important afternoon arrived. I daresay that even at La Scala, on a first night, there never had been more flutter and nervous excitement than on our little stage. The house was crowded with anxious mothers, sisters, cousins and aunts—the male members of the respective families having been wise enough to stop away. At last the curtain rose. My poor mother was horrified to see me disgracing my prominent position by standing more awkwardly than any of the others, my pretty frock already disarranged, and my hands spread so conspicuously over my chest, that, in her eyes, they soon became the most prominent part of the scene. Losing the tune, I suddenly stopped, and foolishly began to giggle. My mother overheard some one remark, "What a funny awkward little girl!" Others laughed outright. The performance over, I felt very like a great heroine, and took my "consolation prize" (what an excellent institution it is!) as though it had been some well-earned laurel; only, I could not quite understand my mother's crestfallen look. That was my "first appearance upon any stage!"

During the following term the convent was stricken with a contagious fever, and I was taken away from its friendly shelter just as I had begun to love it. The serious illness that ensued was made almost pleasant by my mother's care, the companionship of that best of friends, my brother Joe (to whom, alas, I gave, with unconscious liberality, all the ills my flesh was heir

to), and by the frequent visits of our Nonie, who often improvised, or played from some favorite master, on the organ below, thus cheering my convalescence, and making the names of Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven familiar to me long before I had ever heard the magic one of Shakespeare. A year of idleness followed this illness, greatly relished then, but later, when the irrevocable flight of valuable time was realized, deeply regretted. De Quincey says that by deducting time for eating, sleeping, exercise, bathing, illness, and so forth, a person of three score and ten has only eleven and a half years left for the development of what is most august in our nature. When study was recommenced, it was at a day school, the Presentation Academy. There, with accustomed indolence, I learned nothing, with the exception of reading, in which I was generally head of the class. Every day I was sent to school with a shining morning face, a fresh frock, and a tidy blue ribbon to bind my obstreperous locks. Every evening I returned home with the frock ink-stained and torn, the pretty ribbon lost, and looking about the head and hands a veritable "Strubelpéter." I was punished continually for not knowing my lessons—made to stand in a corner balancing a book upon my head, or sit on the dunce stool, which, fortunately for me, was softly cushioned. "I love sitting here," said I to Sister du Chantal—who was fond of me in spite of my mischievousness, and who always administered necessary punishment in a kindly way—"for I am nearer to you, can see the girls better, and this seat is so much more comfortable than those hard benches." Doctor Griffin's brother, Guilderoy—always a favorite with me—lived near us in those days. My brother and I were taken at his request to his charming parties, whenever any person of interest graced them. It was on one of these occasions that I saw George D. Prentice for the first time. Celebrated as a poet and wit, his caustic remarks in the journal he edited made him the object of as much fear as admiration. Having been told that Mr. Prentice was a great man, that he was not to be talked to or stared at, my terror may be imagined when he took me on his knee; for, though his heart was kind, his face, doubtless from having had many hard fights with the world, wore a stern, forbidding look, and was deeply furrowed with careworn lines. His manner was gruff, and his hands, I noticed, were soiled and ink-stained. After trotting me on his knee until I

was "distilled almost to jelly" with fear, he took me across the room to ask questions and receive answers from that uncanny little machine, La Planchette, in which he was greatly interested. The result of that meeting was a frightful nightmare, in which Mr. Prentice, with his gaunt figure, thin grey locks, and Mephistophelian brows, appeared as a magician, and La Planchette as a small grinning devil under his spell.

It was my desire to be always good and obedient, but, like "Cousin Phœnix's legs," my excellent intentions generally carried me in the opposite direction. On seeing a minstrel show for the first time I was fired with a desire to reproduce it. After a week of secret plotting with Joe, I invited Dr. Griffin and my mother to a performance of the nature of which they were utterly ignorant. It took place in our front parlor, the audience sitting in the back room. When the folding doors were thrown open, my baby sister and I were discovered as "end men." She was but eight months old and tied to a chair. Our two small brothers sat between us, and we were all as black as burnt cork, well rubbed in by my managerial hands, could make us. Blissfully ignorant of my mother's mute consternation, I gaily began the opening chorus :

"Good-bye, John ! Don't stay long !  
Come back soon to your own chickabiddy."

The scene that ensued I need not describe. After being punished for some such naughtiness, I usually wended my way to the attic, that being the most gloomy part of the house, where, indulging my misery to the full, I would imagine myself dead, and revengefully revel in the thought of my mother's repentant grief over my coffin. On seeing my tear-stained face, she generally gave me a dime to soothe my wounded feelings, which it invariably did as soon as I could reach an "ice-cream saloon," and there invest in a saucer of "child's delight."

At that time, my brother and I had two farms in the hills of Indiana. Twice a year we crossed the beautiful Ohio to visit them. There we found some excellent horses, and it was not long before I learned to catch one in the paddock and mount and ride without saddle or bridle.

Years after, in London, a well-known riding-master said to me, "Why, Miss Handerson, you 'ave missed your vocation. What a hexcellent circus hactor you would 'ave made ! I'd like

to see the 'orse as could throw you now." My early training without stirrups, often without saddle or bridle, had taught me how to sit firmly.

At the age of twelve I first heard the name of him who was to awaken the serious side of my nature, and eventually shape my later career. One night Dr. Griffin, who had in his youth prided himself on his acting as an amateur, took down from the bookshelf, a large, well-worn, red and gold volume.

"This," he said, "contains all the plays of William Shakespeare, and I mean to read to you the great master's masterpiece, 'Hamlet.'" Though I understood nothing of the subtle thought and beauty of the tragedy, the mere story, characters, and above all that wonderful though nameless atmosphere that pervades all of Shakespeare's dramatic works, delighted and thrilled me. For days I could think of nothing but the pale face and inky cloak of the melancholy prince. The old red volume had suddenly become like a casket filled with jewels, whose flames and flashes I thought might glorify a life. I often stopped to look at it with longing eyes, and one day could not resist climbing up to take it from its shelf. From that time most of my play hours were spent poring over it.

One night, not long after, the family were surprised to see me enter the parlor, enveloped in one of Dr. Griffin's army cloaks. I was scowling tragically, and at once began the speech:

"Angels and ministers of grace, defend us !  
Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damned,"

my version being,

"Angels and *minstrels* of grace, defend us !  
Be thou a spirit of health or *goblin's dame*."

The latter innovation was made to evade having on my conscience so sinful a "swear" as *damned*. Those present, seeing the drift of my entrance, burst into laughter at the droll little figure with its much bepowdered face. Feeling this to be disrespectful, I indignantly quitted the room, falling over the cumbersome cloak in what was meant to be a majestic exit. Certainly a very unpromising first appearance in the bard's great masterpiece !

The first play I ever saw was "Richard the Third," with Edwin Adams as the crook-backed tyrant. Young, graceful, handsome, an ideal actor in romantic characters, he was hardly fitted for so sombre and tragic a part. Yet the force of his per-

sonal magnetism stamped his every word, look, and gesture indelibly upon my memory. The music and lights, the actors and actresses, whose painted faces seemed far more perfect to me then—I was but twelve years old—than anything in nature; luckless *Anne*, *Henry the Sixth*, who, though he is an interloper in the play, makes, through Cibber's daring, a splendidly effective acting scene; the royal army, consisting of six “scrawny” knock-kneed supers, with a very unmilitary look about them—all are as clear before me now as though I had seen them yesterday. How we always remember the first dip into a new sensation; after-impressions of things a hundredfold greater are blotted from our minds!

My mother, seeing my delight in the play, promised that, if we deserved it, my brother and I should occasionally attend the weekly matinées. With such a reward as two theatre tickets in view, any amount of good conduct was cheap in payment. I became less mischievous and forgetful.

We were blest with but little of this world’s goods at the time, and, my help in the household being needed, I was taught the culinary art. In a few months I could cook an excellent dinner when called upon. I remember sitting by the stove with a basting spoon (to be used on a turkey) in one hand, and Charles Reade’s “Put Yourself in His Place” in the other. “The Winter’s Tale,” “Julius Cæsar,” and “Richard the Third” were also read as I sat by the kitchen fire baking bread. The theory that it is impossible to do two things at once did not appeal to me. I felt certain that no one could enjoy the poet’s inspiration more than I, and at the same time turn out a better loaf. Thankful I have always been for the knowledge of these useful arts—which I think every girl should master—as they are wholesome both for mind and body.

When the longed-for Saturday came, little Joe and I would start for the old Louisville Theatre, then on the corner of Fourth and Green streets, quite two hours before the doors were opened. The man in the lobby, observing my singular keenness, soon allowed us, early as it was, to enter, though he was compelled to lock the door after us. We would then sit alone in the large dimly-lighted theatre, feeling the most privileged of mortals, silently watching the great green curtain, and imagining all the enchantments it concealed. To leave the Temple of Enchant-

ment and come back to commonplace realities was our only sadness. Fairy plays, melodramas, and minstrel shows formed our regular menu.

An announcement that Edwin Booth was to visit Louisville filled its playgoers with delightful anticipations. Times were hard, we were poor, and many sacrifices had to be made to enable us to witness a few of his performances. "Richelieu" was the first of the series. What a revelation it was! I had never seen any great acting before, and it proved a turning point in my life. The subtle cunning with which the artist invested the earlier parts of the play was as irresistible as the power, fire, and pathos of the later scenes were terrible and electrifying. It was impossible to think of him as an actor. He was *Richelieu*. I felt for the first time that acting was not merely a delightful amusement but a serious art that might be used for high ends. After that brilliant performance sleep was impossible. On returning home I sat at the window of my little room until morning. The night passed like an hour. Before the dawn I had mapped out a stage career for myself. Thus far, having had no fixed aim of my own making or liking, I had frittered my time away. Then I realized that my idle life must end, and that much study and severe training would have to be undertaken: this in secret, however, for there was no one to go to for sympathy, help or advice in such a venture. Indignant that all my people had, in times gone by, looked upon so noble an art as harmful, if not sinful, I felt no prick of conscience in determining to work out clandestinely what seemed to me then my life's mission. I was fourteen years of age, inexperienced and uneducated, but I had not a moment of doubt or fear. Mr. Booth's other performances intensified my admiration for his art,\* and strengthened me in my resolution. Who can ever forget his *Hamlet*? Where shall we find another such *Iago*, *Richard*, *Macbeth*, *Shylock*? Surely,

"He was the Jew  
That Shakespeare drew."

Would not Macklin himself have given him the palm for his portrayal of that great character? I am proud to owe my awakening to the possibilities of dramatic art to such a master.

\* That admirable woman and artist, Helen Faucit (Lady Martin), once told me that, since Macready, few actors had approached Mr. Booth in intellectuality, perfect elocution, grace, personal magnetism, or the power of complete identification with his characters. It was a great pride to me, an American, that this gifted and severely critical Englishwoman appreciated so unstintedly our beloved actor.

His engagement over, I made a proposition to my mother, a promise rather, that I would apply myself earnestly to study, if allowed to work at home, school having grown unbearable ; I agreed that, if at the end of a month she saw no improvement, I would willingly return to the Academy. After much consideration, she determined to give this new arrangement a trial, the old one having been far from successful. I selected for my study a small white-washed carpetless room at the top of the house, where no one was likely to intrude; its only furniture a table and chair, a crucifix, a bust of Shakespeare, a small photograph of Edwin Booth, and a pair of foils, which I had learned to use with some skill. Bronson, Comstock, and Murdock on Elocution, Rush on the Voice, Plutarch's Lives, Homer's Iliad, and the beloved red and gold volume of Shakespeare, were my only books ; and these had been stolen by degrees from the library below. After many years in more luxurious apartments, how often have I longed for that fresh, sunshiny little den !

A few years before, I had had an attack of malignant diphtheria, which would have proved fatal but for a successful operation Nonie had been bold enough to perform. The attack left my throat very weak. Realizing that a far-reaching voice was one of the actor's most essential instruments, my first effort, on beginning work, was to strengthen mine. In Comstock there were certain instructions upon breathing which I promptly made use of. Strange it is, but very few of us know how to breathe properly. The simple method of taking a deep full breath through the nose, without strain, holding it as long as possible and slowly exhaling it through the mouth, never going through the exercise more than twelve times consecutively, and always in the open air, not only freshens one, like a dip in the sea, but, when followed by certain vocal exercises, gives control over the voice, which it strengthens and makes melodious. At the end of six months my voice was hardly recognizable, it had become so much fuller and stronger. Here was a great difficulty overcome. As a voice that can be heard is the alpha of the actor, grace is one of the requisites next in importance. Tall for my age, I was conscious of being extremely awkward. This defect was not so easily remedied, and for years, in spite of constant efforts to conquer it, remained one of my great drawbacks.

The parts of *Richard the Third*, *Richelieu*, *Pauline*, and

Schiller's *Joan of Arc* were memorized and studied in detail. Schoolroom lessons were also worked at with such good-will that in one month I had made more progress than during six at school. So satisfactory was the new system that it was allowed to continue. The real cause of this improvement no one guessed. My secret, however, consumed me. I longed to tell someone of my plans for the future, and above all to show how I could read and act, for as yet I had no proof that I was working in the right direction.

In the South most of the servants were negroes. Among ours was a little mulatto girl ("nut-brown maid," she called herself), whose chief attraction to me was her enthusiasm for the theatre. One night in desperation I went to her while she was washing dishes in the kitchen, and there unfolded all my hopes. It was to her I first acted, and it was she who gave me my first applause. The clapping of those soapy, steaming hands seemed to me a veritable triumph. Believing that a tragic manner alone would sufficiently impress the situation on the "nut-brown maid," I began with a hollow voice and much furrowing of the brow: "Juli, wilt thou follow and assist me when I quit my childhood's home to walk in the path of Siddons, Kemble, and Booth?" "Oh, Miss Manie, you kin count on dis pusson, fo' de Lor' you kin! Why, my stars, what a boss actor you is! But you mus' 'low me to call your maw;" and in a trice she was gone. A few moments later she re-entered the kitchen with my mother, who was greatly surprised by my performance in the fourth act of "The Lady of Lyons," which could not have been acted in a more appropriate part of the house. She in turn called the critic of the family, Dr. Griffin, who likewise was astonished, and made my heart beat with joy by saying, "You'll make a good actress some day. Your scene has thrilled me, and I would rather have rough work and a good thrill than any amount of artistic work without it." Spurred on by such encouragement I worked harder than ever, often staying up half the night to get some effect while trying to look into the heart and mind of the character under study. After that evening in the kitchen, I read scenes or acted them nightly to our small household, usually from "Hamlet," "Richard," or Schiller's "Maid of Orleans."

Dr. Griffin was practising medicine at the time, and happened

to be called in to see Mr. Henry Wouds,\* the leading comedian of Macauley's Theatre. He spoke to the actor so continually and enthusiastically of my work, that the latter at last requested a reading from me. *Richard* was the part, I determined, which would be the best, not to read, but to act to him. The interval before the day fixed for this trial was intensely exciting, and I was painfully nervous on seeing Mr. Wouds accompanied by the stage and business managers of the theatre, coming towards our house. I had never before seen an actor off the stage ; this was in itself a sensation, and I felt besides that my whole future depended on his judgment of my work. The acting began, and was continually applauded. When over, Mr. Wouds sprang towards me, and, taking both my hands, said, "Let me be the first to hail you as our American Rachel."

Mr. Wouds was soon called away to support Miss Charlotte Cushman during her engagement in Cincinnati, Ohio. He evidently spoke of my work to the great artist, for, a few days after his departure, a letter came from him saying that Miss Cushman wished to hear me read. My mother, thinking such attentions injurious to one so young, grew nervous when she saw that not only was I bent upon going but that my usual champion, Dr. Griffin, meant to aid and abet me. He urged her to make the short trip, if only to see the great actress. With much persuasion he won the day, and we started for Cincinnati.

The first character in which we saw Miss Cushman was *Meg Merrilies*, in an indifferent dramatization of Sir Walter Scott's "Guy Mannering." When, in the moonlight of the scene, she dashed from her tent on to the stage, covered with the grey shadowy garments of the gipsy sibyl, her appearance was ghost-like and startling in the extreme. In her mad rushes on and off the stage, she was like a cyclone. During the prophecy:

"The dark shall be light  
And the wrong made right,  
And Bertram's right, and Bertram's might,  
Shall meet on Ellengowan's height,"

she stood like some great withered tree, her arms stretched out, her white locks flying, her eyes blazing under their shaggy brows. She was not like a creature of this world, but like some mad majestic wanderer from the spirit land. When *Dirk Hatteraick's*

\* A few years later, wearying of the stage, Mr. Wouds entered the church, where his preaching was highly appreciated.

fatal bullet entered her body, and she came staggering down the stage, her terrible shriek,\* so wild and piercing, so full of agony and yet of the triumph she had given her life to gain, told the whole story of her love and her revenge. When after her awfully realistic death-scene, she had been carried from the stage, there was perfect silence in the crowded theatre, and not until the curtain fell upon the last few lines of the play did shouts of enthusiasm break the stillness. The surprise and pleasure of the audience knew no bounds when, having washed off her witch's mask, she came before them *in propria persona*, a sweet-faced old lady, with a smile all kindness, and a graciousness of manner quite royal. Indeed, I never saw such charm and dignity, until years after, at Westminster Abbey, when, celebrating her Golden Jubilee, Queen Victoria, with one sweeping courtesy, acknowledged with majestic grace the presence of the assembled multitude.

It was arranged that we should meet Miss Cushman the next day. We accordingly awaited her in the large parlor of the hotel. Presently we heard a heavy masculine tread, and a voice, too high for a man's, too low for a woman's, saying, "I am sorry to be late, but some of the actors were duller than usual this morning." She stood before us, her well-set figure simply clad, the short hair in her neck still in curling pins, showing a delightful absence of vanity, for she had just come in from the street. She looked at me for a moment with the keenest interest in her kind blue-grey eyes, then wrung my hand with unexpected warmth. "Come, come, let us lose no time," said she in her brisk business-like way. "Let us see what you can do. *Richard!* *Hamlet!* *Richelieu!* Schiller's *Maid of Orleans*? A curious selection for such a child to make. But begin, for I am pressed for time." It was trying to stand without preparation before so great a woman, but, with a determined effort to forget her, I acted scenes from "*Richelieu*" and "*Jeanne d'Arc*." When the trial was over, I stood before her in that state of flush and quiver

\* An actor who played *Dirk Hatteraick* with her, told me that at this climax she struck her breast, which was like a coal of fire with the disease that was fast killing her, and that her cry was one of intense agony. Talma believed that an actor had two distinct beings in him, apart from the good and the evil we all possess—viz., the artist, who is any character he may be cast for, and the man in his own person. His theory was that the artist always studies the man, and cannot consider himself near perfection until he becomes master of the man's every mood and emotion. He describes the deathbed of his father, and the grief he felt in losing so excellent a parent, but adds that even in that solemn moment the artist began curiously to study the grief of the man. Yet he does not speak of the artist giving the man physical pain for the production of a stage effect, as did the great Cushman.

which often follows our best efforts. Laying her hand kindly upon my shoulder, "My child," said she, "you have all the attributes that go to make a fine actress; too much force and power at present, but do not let that trouble you. Better have too much to prune down, than a little to build up." My mother was troubled at hearing her speak so calmly of the stage as my future career, and protested earnestly. No one, she said, of her family, nor of my father's, had ever been on the stage, and she added that, to be frank, she did not like the atmosphere of the theatre, and could not look with favor upon a child of hers adopting it as a profession. Miss Cushman listened attentively. "My dear madam," she answered, "you will not judge the profession so severely when you know it better. Encourage your child; she is firmly and rightly, I think, resolved on going upon the stage. If I know anything of character, she will go with or without your consent. Is it not so?" (to me). "Yes," said I—and how my heart beat at the confession. "Be her friend," continued she to my mother. "Give her your aid; no harm can come to her with you by her side." Then turning to me again, "My advice to you is not to begin at the bottom of the ladder; for I believe the drudgery of small parts, in a stock company without encouragement, often under the direction of coarse natures, would be crushing to you. As a rule I advocate beginning at the lowest round, but I believe you will gain more by continuing as you have begun. Only go to my friend, George Vandenhoff, and tell him from me that he is to clip and tame you generally. I prophesy a future\* for you, if you continue working earnestly. God be with you! Doubtless in a year or two you will be before the public. May I be there to see your success!" With a hearty farewell she stalked out of the room. That was our first and last interview. In her almost brusque manner, she had led me to the right path, and had, in less than an hour, fought successfully the dreaded battle with my mother. In two years' time, I had made my *début* upon the stage, and she, the greatest of all American actresses, was sleeping her last sleep in a laurel-covered grave at Mount Auburn.

MARY DE NAVARRO.

\* Miss Cushman's words have been given, not because they were flattering to the writer, but because they show the quick decisiveness, insight into character, and generosity of the eminent woman.